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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 001887

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#) [LY](#) [ER](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PRIME MINISTER ON REGIONAL OUTREACH AND
NEXT STEPS

REF: A. NAIROBI 1861

[1](#)B. NAIROBI 1860

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Classified By: Counselor for Somalia Affairs Bob Patterson for reasons
1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke and the Ministers of Defense and Planning met with members of the Somalia Affairs Unit on September 5. The Prime Minister had just visited Libya which has now confirmed it is politically supportive of the TFG, including favoring sanctions on Eritrea. Sharmarke discussed the TFG strategy in the Juba region (ref A) and measures it is prepared to take to ensure the allegiance of key regional leaders. He told us that with a TFG victory, he would like to see immediate renewed humanitarian assistance deliveries and possible deployment of AMISOM troops into the port of Kismayo. He said the central regions of Galmudug are ready to engage with the TFG and that he is negotiating political issues with residents in the regions. The Prime Minister discussed outreach to and close personal ties with Alhu Sunna Wal Jamma (ASWJ) and efforts to empower local administrations in the Galgaduud region, and Galmudug "state." Sharmarke raised the issue of needing to prevent humanitarian food assistance from becoming "investments" in al-Shabaab. The Prime Minister promised that the TFG delegation planning to attend UNGA will have a clear strategy and specific proposals to present in New York. End Summary.

Libya Offers Full Political
Support for TFG

[1](#)2. (SBU) On the heels of the September 2 meeting with President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed (ref B), on September 5, members of the Somalia Affairs Unit met with Transitional Federal Government (TFG) Prime Minister Omar Abdirashid Sharmarke in Nairobi. Also in attendance was newly-appointed Minister of Defense Abdallah "Boss" Ahmed and Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame. The Prime Minister was en route to Mogadishu, having visited Libya for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of Qadhafi's rule.

[1](#)3. (C) Sharmarke said the TFG finally won Libya's support after a recent telephone conversation between President

Qadhafi and al-Shabaab leader Abu Zabeyr Godane went badly. Godane reportedly told the Libyan President that al-Shabaaaab will never stop its efforts to overthrow the TFG and that once they have installed a proper Islamic government in Somalia, al-Shabaab will do the same in the region, including Libya. Sharmarke told us that Qadhafi is now willing to throw his personal weight behind defeating al-Shabaab, including supporting sanctions on Eritrea.

Strategy to Engage the Juba Region

¶4. (C) The Prime Minister told us the TFG is still trying to gain control of the Juba region (ref b). Sharmarke said he and others are negotiating with Ras Kamboni militia leader and Hizbul Islam member Ahmed Madobe (Darod/Ogaden/Mohamed Zubeir) to recruit him into the government. The PM said that he has not decided whether to offer Madobe a ministerial post in Mogadishu or to formalize his leadership in the region. At a minimum, we encouraged the Prime Minister to consider keeping Madobe in Lower Juba instead of bringing an outside administrator from Mogadishu to administer Juba's local government structures. The TFG's senior leadership continues to lobby Madobe to take on al-Shabaab and then declare himself aligned with the TFG if he is successful. The Prime Minister told us he was concerned about how Ethiopia may view an Ogadeni-led Juba administration. He asked us to help assure the Ethiopians did not disrupt Ogadeni efforts in Lower Juba by sending Marehan militias south in a race for Kismayo.

¶5. (C) The Prime Minister also raised the importance of a humanitarian surge into the region as soon as security

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permits, and a stabilization plan that can be implemented after the military campaign to ensure that the initiative "does not degenerate into a clan problem." To stabilize security after the military campaign, Sharmarke said that he intends to explore the possibility of requesting an AMISOM contingent deploy to the port of Kismayo, if that would be welcomed by Kismayo's citizens. Minister of Defense Abdullah "Boss" Ahmed planned to raise this with AMISOM commanders. Sharmarke said the deployment of additional AMISOM battalions will be an immediate asset to the TFG. We explained that rather than bring in another Burundi battalion, the United States favored more training and equipment for the Burundi contingent to increase their mobility and capacity to control.

Central Region Outreach Continues

¶6. (C) PM Sharmarke echoed President Sharif's report that the TFG is actively reaching out to the central regions. During his recent visit to Puntland, the PM said that the everyone, including Puntland President "Faroole" discouraged him from visiting anarchic Southern Galkayo. The PM told us he was particularly impressed with the Galmudug state administration's governing capacity, including its well-trained, uniformed Galmudug security forces. PM Sharmarke said that during his visit to the area he began to bridge the divide between Northern and Southern Galkayo and encouraged a closer relationship between the TFG and both Puntland and the central regions.

¶7. (C) PM Sharmarke and his ministers stated that ASWJ remains a key focus of their outreach efforts. Giving us a short history of the transition of ASWJ from a spiritual to a political organization, all the TFG ministers emphasized, "We are all Alhu Sunna Wal Jamma." The PM said he met with key ASWJ spiritual leader Sheikh Omar while he was in Galkayo where he promised to bring his Galgaduud-based followers into the TFG. Sharmarke told us he would send TFG principals to

Galgaduud to shore up the TFG-ASWJ relationship. (Note: After our meeting with the PM, we saw representatives of Galgaduud's northern wing of ASWJ waiting to see the Prime Minister. Their reaction to their meeting with the PM will be reported septel).

Food Aid Concerns

18. (C) PM Sharmarke asked us about media reports that the United States had halted food aid to organizations such as World Food Programme. We allayed his concerns and emphasized our continued commitment to humanitarian support. We explained the Office of Foreign Asset Control's certification process and the USG's worry that humanitarian assets could be used to support al-Shabaab. The Prime Minister said that the politics of humanitarian aid delivery remains a "serious problem" and that in certain areas, al-Shabaab is clearly benefiting. He said that there needs to be greater clarity between food assistance to the needy and activities that become an "investment" in al-Shabaab which enable them to sustain the war. As an example, the PM mentioned the UN's use of the Wajid airport which affords al-Shabaab leaders with cash from aircraft landing fees. The Prime Minister said he was fully supportive of efforts led by the Minister of Planning and International Cooperation to work with the International Donor's Group to introduce policies for NGOs operating in the country.

Comment

19. (C) PM Sharmarke's hope that Libya will engage on the TFG's behalf is encouraging, but we will wait to see what comes of it. We note PM Sharmarke referred to ongoing, "frank discussions" with Lower Juba's Ahmed Madobe and we urged the TFG to continue to "recruit" Madobe, and prepare to exploit his possible declaration of allegiance to the TFG. The Prime Minister's engagement with ASWJ is encouraging but

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we don't believe the TFG has honored its June mutual support agreement to ASWJ's satisfaction. We continue to press the TFG to pay more than lip service to ASWJ's northern wing, and we worry that ASWJ's patience may be running out. The PM mentioned President Sharif's trip to UNGA and we urged him to work closely with his key ministers to develop strategy documents and tangible priorities that could be addressed in meetings in New York. While Sharmarke spoke in general terms about TFG efforts, he and his ministers did not offer specifics about the next steps they will employ to ensure successful initiatives and stronger alliances in the regions.

RANNEBERGER